

**Doctor Wallis's**  
**LETTER**  
**Touching the**  
**DOCTRINE**  
**OF THE**  
**Blessed Trinity**

Answer'd by his FRIEND.

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*Honoured SIR,*

I Read your Letter touching the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, you were pleas'd to send me, with a great deal of Attention and Satisfaction; and thereupon went to visit a Neighbour of mine, one that is reputed a modest

Gentleman, but one that is also reputed an Unitarian or Socinian. I shew'd him your Letter, and made no question, but it would Convince him, as it had done me, that they who denied the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Three distinct Persons to be each

A

each

each of them God in the most perfect Sense of that Term, and yet but One God, were in a very dangerous and palpable Errour. But I found my self greatly mistaken; for he presently told me, that you had unfairly represented them, changing them with an Opinion which they abhor; to wit, That *howe clear soever the Expressions of Scripture be, or can be, to this purpose, they will not believe it, as being inconsistent with Natural Reason.* And therefore though they do not think fit to give us a bare-fac'd Rejection of Scripture, yet they do ( and must they tell us) put such a forc'd Sense on the words of it ( be they never so plain) as to make them signify somewhat else.

He told me he did very much wonder, and was sorry for your sake, that a Man of such Reputation for Learning and Piety, should be guilty of so much uncharitable rashness against a Party of Men, which even some of their Adversaries being Judges, are both Learned and Pious, though Erroneous. If it were not then heavy Zeal for one of the great and clear Attributes of God (the God and Father of our Lord Jesus) his Utterly; What ( faith he to me, with a most compassionate Concern) should make them expose themselves to all manner of Obscurity, Reproach, and Detestation of almost all that go under the Name of Christians, in these Parts, to the utmost of Injuries and Persecutions, the loss of their Employments, Estates, Liberties, Countries, and some of them of Life it self, by the violent Death of Hareicks? Neither do they this from an Enthusiastic Heat, nor yet upon the account of some indifferent, or next to indifferent things in the Worship and Disci-

pline of the Church; it's no less than the Incommunicable Nature of the *only Potentate,* King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, that they suffer for; hoping for their Reward through the Faith of these Promises revealed by Christ our Lord, and recorded only in the Holy Scriptures. The Authority whereof none have maintained with stronger Reasonings, nor are more diligent in searching out the true Sense of them, nor are more ready to submit to their Dictates. He said moreover, That it was too common, for even Learned Men to charge the *Socinians*, under the Name of *Sorcerers*, with such Sayings as their Adversaries charge them with by Consequences, without reading their Books. Nay, it is well known at Oxford, that one in an Act there, disputing for his Degree in Divinity, took a Thesis to maintain, to the very same purpose with that which your Friend avers against the *Socinians*, but his Learned Opponent having read their Books, did to baffle him, that it appeared the Respondent had not read them; but took his Testimonies from their Adversaries. I would fain think otherwise of Dr. Wallis; but he gives me here too much cause to suspect him; I will appeal to you (faith he) whether he does not.

Then he fetch'd me *Socius ad Authoritatem S. Script.* and read in pag. 16. *Quod enim ad Rationes attinet, nec nimis fallax via est in re que ex Divina patefactione pudent, qualis est Christiana Religio.* "For as to Reasons, this is too fallible a way in a Matter which depends on Divine Revelations, such as Christian Religion is. Next he brought *Socilitionis*, another eminent Writer that followed

followed *Socinus*; He in his Book *Adv. Miffl. de SS. Trin.* p. 68. His Adversary had said, That Holy Scripture only is the most perfect Rule of Faith and Life. To which *Schlichtingius* answers. "That if *de ratione  
bus, clarissimis verbis in Scriptura  
conveniatis*, &c. it be touching Points  
express in Scripture in most clear  
words, so that no Man of a sound  
Mind can doubt of the Sense of  
them, then he grants it; and that  
chiefly, because it is most certain,  
That the Scripture contains nothing  
that is repugnant to manifest Reason,  
or that implies a real Contradiction:  
But if it treat of obscure Mat-  
ters, every one sees that it can-  
not be determin'd without Reason,  
which yet is not to be fetch'd in, as  
if it could be opposed to Scripture,  
affirming or denying any thing, but  
only to declare, whether such a  
thing be contained in Scripture, or  
not? If it appear to be contain'd  
in it, whatsoever Reason may still  
say in Contradiction, it must of ne-  
cessity be deceived. This, says my  
Gentleman, is a clear Account of the  
*Socinian*s Judgment in this Point, and  
is a direct Confutation of what you  
have read me out of your Doctor's  
Letter. He added yet another of  
their great Men, *Smalcarius contr. Frant.*  
*Diss.* 4. p. 137. "Nulla enim est Chris-  
tiana Religionis particula, &c. There  
is not the least part of Christian  
Religion, which doth not accord  
with Reason, and that Opinion,  
which doth not agree with Reason,  
can have no place in Divinity. As  
a small Light to a great one, so Rea-  
son is not contrary to Holy Scrip-  
ture. Let *Frantzus*, or any body  
else, tells us of any one Sentence of  
Holy Scripture that is repugnant to

Reason, and then let Reason be fi-  
lent in the Church. Religion and  
Holy Scripture hath many things  
above Reason, and therein it highly  
commends it self, bat nothing which  
is contrary to Reason. Of these two  
last Passages the learned and candid Dr.  
*Timison* takes notice (in his Book *The  
Difference betwixt the Protestant and Socinian  
Methods*) in Abatement of his  
Charge against some *Socinians* for ex-  
alting Reason too much. Perhaps  
(saith he) your Friend, Dr. Wallis,  
had read that Book, but took no notice  
of the Quotations in the Margin. And  
if he were put to't, to maintain his  
Charge, viz. That they do (and must,  
they till we) put such a forced Sense on  
the words of it [the Scripture] (or they  
never so plain) as to make them signi-  
fy somewhat else: I am perswaded he  
would acquit himself no better than the  
Candidate in Divinity I told you  
of.

He was much concerned at the In-  
juriousness of this Imputation; and  
said, He thought there was no sort of  
Protestants, of different Sentiments  
from the Publick, that were so inhu-  
manly dealt with as the *Unitarians*;  
for they are so far from denying there  
are Three Persons in One God, and  
asserting only One, in opposition to  
the plainest Scriptures, that they are  
thoroughly perswaded, the whole Scrip-  
ture, wherever it is plain, is on their  
side. For does not every Text in the  
whole Bible, that speaks clearly of  
the most High God, speak of him as  
One single Person, except only two  
or three obscure Passages in *Genesij*?  
Neither can we have any Idea or  
Conception of God, but *Person* is in-  
cluded in it, taking Person for an in-  
telligent Being; so that all plain and  
clear Scriptures militate for them;

and the *Trinitarians*, or those that say there are Three Persons in God, or that *Three Persons* are all one *God*, as your Doctor says, have no Scriptures left, but those that are obscure. And that they are obscure, appears clearly by this; That there is scarce one Text alledged, by them, which is not otherwise expounded, and in consistency with the Unity of the Person of God by their Writers. You may see a great number of these Texts and Expositions, in a Book entituled, *Scriptura S. Trin. Revelatrix*, under the Name of Cingallus.

Your Doctor (proceeds he) names but two Texts, for he takes his Opinion for granted, as sufficiently proved by others. His first Text is, *1 John 5. 7. There are Three that bear Witness in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are One.* One would expect now that the Learned Doctor, naming but two Texts, should cull out those that were strongest for his purpose; and yet this Text is so far from being clear and strong, That, 1. it has not the Authority as other Scriptures have; for it appears not in the most ancient Copies of the Greek, nor in the Syrack, nor Arabick, nor Ethiopick, nor Armenian Bibles, nor in the most eminent Latin Bibles. 'Tis not urged by the Fathers in their Disputes about this Question. It's wholly rejected by some, and counted doubtful by almost all Learned Men. You may see (saith he) in Dr. Burnet, Bishop of *Salisbury*, his second Letter in his Travels, how variously and uncertainly that Text appears in Ancient Manuscripts. Here my Neighbour crav'd my Pardon, went to his Closet, and presently brought me a Greek Testament,

printed at Strasburg by *Wolfin Crphaleus*, Anno 1524. in the beginning of the Reformation, wherein this Verse is wanting. But, 2d, allowing it to be Authentick, yet the most Learned, even of the *Trinitarians*, understand it not thus, *These Three are One God*; but *These Three are One in Testimony, or agree in Testimony*. See *Bizq, Vatablus, Calvin, Erasmus*, the English *Geneva Notes*. As for his other Text, *Matth. 28. 19. I refer you to The Brief History of the Unitarians, &c. in four Letters*, whereof he gave me a Copy. Only I desire you (says he) to consider how clear a Proof this Text is, which must run thus: *We are Baptized in [ or into ] the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Therefore these Three Persons are One God, and each of them by himself God.* As if the *Israelites*, by being Baptized into *Mosis*, and believing in the Lord, and in *Mosis* his Servant, (so Marg. *Exod. 14. 31.*) did acknowledg *Mosis* to be a Person of the most high God, though he was indeed, in some sense, a *God* to them; for he was so to *Aaron* their High Priest: for thus it is read in the Margin of the English Bible, printed in 1660. *He shall be to thee a Mouth, and thou shalt be to him a God*, *Exod. 4. 16.* You may see the Hebrew so render'd, *Jer. 31. 33.* and the Greek, *Heb. 8. 10.*

I must confess to you, Sir, I could not tell what to oppose to this Argument of his, which shew'd the obscurity of our Texts; and he now made a Pause, and expected my Answer: Wherefore to divert him from taking notice of my Convictions, I asked him if he had any other Argument to prove that Obscurity? He answered,

swered, Yes : And that also is taken ( faith he ) from our Adversaries the Trinitarians, I mean, the *Romanists* : For they are told by Mr. *Chillingworth*, (the Glory of English Protestants) and since that by Dr. *Tenison*, in his words, thus : " For Scripture, your Men deny very plainly and frequently, that this Doctrine of the Trinity, can be proved by it. See, if you please, this plainly taught, and urged very earnestly by Cardinal *Hosius de Author. S. Script. l. 3.* p. 53. by *Gordoniis Huntlaus contr. Tom. I. Controv. I. de Verbo Dei,* c. 19. by *Gretterus* and *Tannerus* in *Colloquio Ratiobus*; and also by *Viga*, *Pofferin*, *Wiekus*, and others. Now it is to be observed, That these Learned Men, especially *Billarmine*, and *Wiekus* after him, have urged all the Scriptures they could, with their utmost industry, find out in this Cause, and yet, after all, they acknowledg their Insufficiency and Obscurity; whereby they give a clear Testimony to the Doctrine of God's being One Person; which to deny, were even to deny the whole Bible.

But besides the current of all Scriptures on our side, we have many clear Texts that prove the Father only to be God. I'll name but two: Our Lord himself professes in his solemn Prayer to his Father, in the presence of his Disciples, saying, *This is Eternal Life, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*, John 17. 3. And the Apostle St. Paul says, in opposition to Gods many, and Lords many, *But to us there is but One God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by*

*him*, 1 Cor. 8. 6. Can any words be more express to prove that there is, but One true God, and One Person of that One God, to wit, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is oppos'd to him by his Names, Relations, and Characters? Again, there be a multitude of Texts that deny those things of Christ, which cannot be denied of God; and that affirm such things of him that cannot agree to him, if he were a Person of God. In like manner of the Holy Ghost. Which of both sorts you may find urg'd and defended in the two Books of *John Crellius*, touching One God the Father; and abridg'd in *Wolzogenius's Preparation ad usum Lectionum Lib. N. T. cap. 2, 3, 4, 5.* So also in your *Brief History*, &c. the first Letter.

I then desired to know of the Gentleman, what he could say to the Tradition of the Christian Church; for you say, that That from the Time of Christ and his Apostles hitherto, as well before as since, the Council of Nice hath ever held the Divinity of these three Persons, and that these Three are but One God. This also you take for granted. He answered, 1. It is the Catholick Principle of all Protestants, that the Holy Scriptures are a compleat Rule of Faith and Manners, and clear and plain in all things necessary. Now since this Doctrine of the Three Persons in One God, is held a Fundamental and Necessary Doctrine, it must consequently be clear and plain to all honest Enquirers, which I clearly see it is not, therefore I can satisfy my self concerning it, without an endless Enquiry into the Fathers and Tradition.

2. I am sure it has not been held

in the Apostles Time, nor, I believe, in any of the Three first Centuries, nor even in the Three next, without much opposition.

3. I think that *Curcellius* has proved, as well as any thing can be proved out of Ancient Writings, That the Doctrine of the Trinity, about the Time of the Council of *Nice*, was of a special Union of Three Persons in the Deity, and not of a numerical, as it is now taught, and has been taught since the Chimerical Schoolmen were hearkened unto.

4. I wonder how Dr. *Wallis* reckons the Christian Church, since he knows there were divers *Arian* Councils, and one of them, that of *Ariminum*, consisted of 550 Bishops, the most numerous Assembly of Bishops perhaps as ever was; except he accounts *Arians* for *Trinitarians*; which if he do, then he cannot chuse but reckon Mr. *Biddis* for one too; for he Tides his Book, *The Apostolical and True Opinion concerning the Holy Trinity revived and asserted*.

5. According to what I have given my self leave to read in the Controvertists of these Times concerning that Matter, I mean *Curcellius* and *Mariusius*, *Sandius*, and *Gardner*, and *Bull*, *Patavius*, *Biddle*, *Eftwich*, and *Le Clerk*; I reckon *Curcellius*, *Biddle*, and *Le Clerk* to be the more free and ingenuous Writers, and therefore more likely to give a true Judgment concerning the Matters they enquire of.

But, 6. I conclude my Judgment with that of the great Protestant Champion *Chillingworth*, chap. 6. n. 56.

— “ By the Religion of Protestants, “ I do not understand the Doctrine “ of *Luther*, or *Calvin*, or *Melanchthon*; “ nor the Confession of *Augusta* or

“ *Geneva*, nor the Catechism of *Hindeburgh*, nor the Articles of the Church of *England*, no, nor the Harmony of Protestant Confessions; but that wherein they all agree, and which they all Subscribe with a greater Harmony, as a perfect Rule of their Faith and Actions, that is, the BIBLE, the BIBLE, the BIBLE, only is the Religion of Protestants! whatsoever else they believe, besides it, and the plain, irrefragable, indubitable Consequences of it, well may they hold it as a Matter of Opinion, but as Matter of Faith and Religion; neither can they, with coherence to their own Grounds, believe it themselves, nor require the Belief of it of others, without most high and most schismatical Presumption. I (for my part) after a long, and as I verily believe and hope, impartial search of the true Way to Eternal Happiness, do protest plainly, that I cannot find any rest for the sole of my Foot, but upon this Rock only. I see plainly, and with mine own Eyes, that there are Popes against Popes, Councils against Councils, some Fathers against others, the same Fathers against themselves; a Consent of Fathers of one Age, against a Consent of Fathers of another Age; the Church of one Age, against the Church of another Age.

— “ No Tradition, but only of Scripture, can derive it self from the Fountain — In a word, there is no sufficient certainty but of Scripture only, for any considering Man to build upon. I would not have Dr. *Wallis* think to impose upon us in this Reign of a Protestant King and Queen, the Doctrine of Tradition; he had better have done it in the late King's Time, then it would

would have been acceptable to the Court.

Sir, I hope (proceeded my Neighbour) you are by this time convinced how unjustly and unlike a Scholar the Doctor (pardon, I pray, my Resentment) has drawn so black an Indictment against the *Socinians*, upon false Grounds, taken for granted by him to be true. I am ashamed to read his words : *Nor do the Anti-Trinitarians insist on any other Ground, why they deny it, [the Trinity, or Three Persons of One God]* save only, *That it seems to them absolutely impossible; and therefore think themselves bound to put another sense on all places of Scripture (how clear soever they be, or can be)* which prove or favour it. It's the contradiction of that Doctrine to a Thousand clear places of Scripture, which they insist upon, as I have shew'd before : But I will pursue it a little further. Will the Doctor deny that the Person of the Father is God ? No, his Opinion afferts it. Will he then deny, That he who is God, is not All-sufficient or Almighty ? If that One Person be All-sufficient, (and he is not God if he be not) then all other Persons, besides him, must of necessity be superfluous, and the introducing them into the Godhead is plain Polytheism, and a direct Contradiction to the first Commandment of the Decalogue, and to all those Texts that assert God to be One, and consequently to those Scriptures that speak of God as One Person, which are without number. No, they first devis'd an Opinion, which is contrary to the clearest Scriptures, and the most evident Reasons, and then they would per-

suade us it is a Mystery, either which we cannot understand, and therefore must be blind to the Contradictions that are in it ; or, if we will not be so satisfied, they call us *Clamorous* and *Importune*, and persecute us with the most odious Imputations they can invent, and then with Fire and Faggot. But that they may seem to give some Answer to those plain Scriptures and Reasons that shine in their Eyes, they soar aloft, quite out of sight, with Metaphysics, or so near out of sight, that we can see nothing but a Cloud. The Notion of One God, and One Person that is that One God, every Man and Woman can understand ; that is, they know perfectly that One Person that is God, cannot be Two Persons, each of which is God : and excepte they had been us'd from their Infancy, to say like Parrots, that Three Persons are One God, and each One of them is that God, they would easily see the Contradictions of it. And indeed the Common People do worship God, far more agreeable to his Will, than the Learned ; for these are obliged by the *Athanasian Creed*, in worshipping One God, to mind him as Three Persons, that is, to have in their Mind the Idea of One Almighty and only wise Person, who is One God by himself, and in the same Act to Adore two other Persons, each of which is as much God by himself, as the former. To worship Three that are equal one to another, and at the same time, and in the same Act to worship but One. But the Common People worship One only Almighty and most Merciful Father, through the Son

as Mediator, except they confound them with express Mention of Two other Persons ; and then they worship expressly Three Gods, as the Learned do always more subtilly. God Almighty, even the Father, knows, he has given us a Commandment, That we should worship him as One, the only Wife, the only Good, the only True, the only Holy, the only Potentate, and none other as God besides him ; which Commandment is as easy to be known by all the People that have Reason enough to understand Numbers, the difference between One and more than One, as it is necessary to be observed ; but is impossible to be observed, because impossible to be apprehended by the Common People, at least, if the Arianian Doctrine be true Divinity. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One Lord : And, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all Thine Heart, with all thy Soul, and with all thy Might,* (*Deut. 6. 4, 5.*) But how shall we do to love each of Three Persons that are equal, with all our Hearts ? All the poor Labourers, with their Wives, in the Country, and all the Tankard-bearers of London, must go to School to Dr. Waldis, and he will teach them Metaphysics and Mathematicks, and read a Lecture to them upon the Three Dimensions, Long, Broad, and Tall, of One Cube : They must love God the Father, who is the Length of the Cube, with all their Hearts, and then God the Son, who is the Breadth, with all their Hearts too, and God the Holy Ghost in the same manner too.

And if we measure this Cube with the Infallible Rule of Scripture, we find that this Long Cube

[the Father] sent this Broad Cube [the Son] on a Message, as far as from Heaven to Earth, [*John 6. 38.*] and anon after sent this tall or deep Cube [the Holy Ghost] after him, [*Math. 3. 16.*] in the mean time he abode in Heaven himself. Moreover, this broad Cube [the Son] is not commensurable with this long Cube the Father, neither Northward nor Southward, in Knowledg (*Mark 13. 32.*) or Power, (*John 14. 28.*) In like manner this tall Cube [the Holy Ghost] receives of this long and broad Cube to make him taller and deeper, *John 16. 14.*

I fancy the poor People would apprehend it better by such a Resemblance as this : Suppose one Woman (*Mary*) to be married to Three Men at once, *Peter, James, and John* ; *I, Mary, take thee Peter, James, and John to be my wedded Husband, &c.* Here are indeed Three Persons, but only One Husband ; the Husbandhood is but One, though the Persons are Three, each of which is Husband to *Mary*, and *Mary* is obliged, by the Contract of Marriage, to pay Conjugal Affection and Duty to each of them. Methinks this is a more familiar parallel than that of a Cube. I do the rather make use of this Similitude, because the Learned and Famous Dr. Sherlock, in his Vindication of the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, tells us, "We must allow "the Divine Persons to be real substantial Beings, *Pag. 47.* And in *Pag. 67.* he saith, "The Father — feels himself to be the Father, and "not the Son, nor the Holy Ghost : "The Son in like manner feels "himself to be the Son, and not "the Father nor Holy Ghost ;" "so

" so the Holy Ghost—As *James*  
" feels himself to be *James*, and not  
" *Peter* nor *John*, which proves them  
" to be distinct Persons. Thus Dr.  
*Wallis* may see that his Notions con-  
cerning the Trinity are old fashion'd,  
Dr. *Sherlock's* are of the new Mode.  
But if he desires to have his Re-  
semblances further displayed, I am  
told he may find them sufficiently ex-  
pos'd in a Book, written in French,  
titled *Le Nouveau Visionnaire* against M.  
*Jurieu*.

Here I did confess indeed that  
Dr. *Sherlock's* Explanation of the Di-  
stinction of Persons was far more clear  
and full than yours: But I had thought  
the Orthodox would not have granted  
so much, and so it seems did you too.  
By this time we came near the end of  
your Letter; in which, he said, there  
were still the same Calumnies over  
and over. Only he took notice of one  
Text of Scripture you insert, which  
you had not before, namely *John* 1. 1,  
14. *The Word was God*, and, *The Word*  
*was made Flesh*. This (saith he) I  
confess were to the purpose; if by the  
term *The Word* could be meant nothing  
else but a Pre-existing Person, and by  
the term *God* nothing but God Al-  
mighty the Creator of Heaven and  
Earth; and if taking those terms in  
those Senses did not make St. *John*  
write Nonsense; and if by *Flesh* could  
be meant nothing but a Man, how ex-  
cellent soever, and not a Mortal Man,  
subject to Infirmities: But all these  
things are otherwise.

For, 1. The Ancient Orthodox  
Sense, at the Council of *Nice*, and af-  
terwards for some Centuries, was this:  
In the beginning of the World, or be-  
fore all Worlds, the Son of God did  
exist, and that Son was with God his  
Father, and that Son was *very God* of  
*very God*, not numerically, but speci-

fically, as *Peter* and *Paul* are of the  
same Substance. Now this Opinion  
was rejected by the Schoolmen, as in-  
troducing two Gods. And the Modern  
Orthodox understand it thus: " In  
" the beginning before all Worlds, or  
" from Eternity, the Son a distinct  
" Person did exist, and that Son was  
" with God his Father, and the Son  
" was that God with whom he was.  
But if they be tied to take the terms  
in the sense of their Opinion, they  
must expound thus: " The Son was  
" with *God*, that is, with the Father,  
" himself and the Holy Ghost; and  
" the Son was the Father, Son, and  
" Holy Ghost. Or, according to  
Dr. *Wallis*, the Breadth of the Cube,  
was with the Length, Breadth and  
Depth of the same Cube, and the  
Breadth was the Cube. And for  
the fourteenth Verse, they say not,  
the Word or Son was made Flesh, but,  
God the Son by the Holy Ghost  
coming upon the blessed Virgin, and  
the Power of the most High over-  
shadowing her, was united to a Human  
Body and Soul. The *Arian* Sense  
you may see in a late Tract, entituled,  
*A Vindication of the Unitarians*. That  
God first made a Super-Angelical Be-  
ing, call'd the Son, and through that  
Son, and by the Holy Ghost, fram'd  
this World, and Man within it; This  
Being was with *God*, and was an An-  
gelical *God*; and this Son, call'd *The*  
*Word*, became Incarnate. The *Socinian*  
Sense was thus: In the beginning of  
the Gospel (*Mark* 1. 1.) was Jesus  
called the Word, because he was the  
prime and chief Expounder and Mini-  
ster of the Gospel; and this Word  
was with God, ascended into Heaven,  
(*John* 3. 13.) and descended thence,  
and being anointed with the Holy  
Ghost and Power, being thus sanctified,  
and sent into the World, was far more

deservedly called the Son of God, and God, then those among the Jews to whom the Word of God came, who yet were called Gods, (*John 10. 35, 36.*) or than that Angel who appeared to *Manoah*, (*Judg. 13. 22.*) And the Evangelist having said in *Vers. 12.* that this true Light, as well as Word, or Light-Bringer, gave Power to those that believed in him to be the Sons of God, he says in *Vers. 14.* that He, the Word, was himself, as well as they, a Mortal and Frail Man.

The Sense of *Paul* Bishop of *Antioch* *An. 262.* (as I have read somewhere in *Milanitikon*) and the Sense of some in our Days was, That this term *Beginning*, must be taken for the beginning of the World; and the term *The Word*, being the Subject of the History in the very Front of it, must be taken properly, and by way of eminence, for the Gospel Word. But a Word, according to *Aristotle*, being twofold, Internal in the Mind, and External in the Speech, the Word here spoken of, must mean the Internal Word of God by way of excellence, that is, the Gospel Decree, as it is taken also in *Titus 1. 3.* where the Apostle *Paul*, having mentioned the Truth which is after Godliness, in hope of Eternal Life, goes on and says, which *God*, that cannot lie, promised [decreed to promise, or in purpose promised] before the World began: hath in due time manifested his Word. [*Ἄλλον ἀντίθετον*] through preaching. This Word was with or in God, not yet manifested: and the Word was God; here God being the Predicate, must have such a Sense as can agree to the Subject Word, either most Divine, as *Spirit* for *Spiritual*, *John 6. 63.* and the very term *God*, *Gal. 1. 10.* for the Doctrine of the Gospel, and in the 18th Verse of this

Chapter, *John 1.* in the same Sense; or as *Grotius* would have it, for the Word of God: but the former Sense seems far better: All things were made by it, to wit, as a Rule or chief Design. According to this Exposition, the Word must not be taken for a Person in the first five Verses, nor till the Evangelist had said in the sixth and seventh Verses, That the Baptist being a Man sent of God, was not the Light which was in the Word mention'd, that is, was not the Bringer or Preacher of the Light; for that must be the Sense, when a Man is said to be, or not to be the Light. But that which is denied of *John*, is affirmed of another, to whom he bare Witness, and that was Jesus, as appears afterwards. He was the true Light, that is, Light-Bringer, which coming into the World, enlighteneth every Man. And now having laid a sufficient Ground for taking the Light, in an improper Sense, for Light-Bringer, his meaning cannot easily be mistaken, when in the fourteenth Verse, he calls the same Man *The Word*, that is, the personal Word, or Great Gospel-Prophet, and says, That *The Word* was, was made, or was born Flesh; that is, a Frail and Mortal Man, (not barely a Man) for so the Word *Flesh* does always signify when it's applied to Man; and Christ is now a Man, but not Flesh. *The Word was made Flesh*, does not imply that this great Word, Prophet, or Messenger of that Word, did exist before he was born, no more than that Phrase in *1 Cor. 15. 45.* *The first Man Adam was made a living Soul*, proves or implies that *Adam* did pre-exist before he was made a living Soul.

Here,

Here, Sir, I interposed, and told my Gentleman, That this Exposition seem'd very uncouth and strange ; I had never heard of it before, and therefore it was not easy for me to apprehend it, much more to receive it. He readily consented to what I said ; and added, That it's a thing which makes Unitarian Interpretations seem forc'd and unnatural, namely, because we have imbib'd from our Youth, and even from our Catechisms, contrary Expositions : But if they were both propos'd to one that had never heard of either of 'em before, he was perswaded the Trinitarian Expositions would seem far more harsh and forc'd, nay, contradictory and absurd. For, to instance in this very Text of *John*, what un-prejudiced Man could ever imagine that this Text should be the Ground of the Doctrine of Two Persons in God, when nothing is more clear in Scripture and Reason, than the Unity of God, which necessarily implies the Unity of his Person. I have been the larger in setting out this Exposition (faith he) because I knew it would be difficult for you to apprehend it.

There is yet another Exposition of this Scripture, which is derived from the Great *Grotius*, and may be found in the *Brief History of the Unitarians*, which I spoke of. But I think I have said enough to convince any Man that is not extremely prejudic'd, that this is an obscure Scripture : For as every one of these Senses finds some specious Grounds in the Text, so never a one of them can clearly answer all the Objections that are levied against them, and that of the *Trinitarians* least of all : Therefore your Doctor writes, either unlike

a Divine, or like a Cenorion, I will not say Malicious Person ; when he says, If God say, *The Word was God*, and *The Word was made Flesh* ; shall we say, not so, only because we cannot tell How ? As if these Sayings were so clear, that they admitted no Sense but his, which understands by *The Word* an Eternally pre-existing Person, whereas the term *Ho Logos* in Greek, which we translate *The Word*, Speech, or Saying, is found (I suppose) forty times in the New Testament taken impersonally for the Gospel, or some Speech : It's Three and twenty times so used in this One Evangelist of St. John, and for the most part oppos'd to the Person of Christ ; and on the other hand, there is not one Text, except this in *1 John* 1. 14, where it can reasonably signify a Person, except we reckon that in *1 John* 5. 7, for one, which I have shew'd to be uncertain, and not to have the Authority of other Sacred Scripture. As for that in *Rev. 19. 13.* — *his Name is called, The Word of God*, that is, not the same with *The Word* simply ; and though it denote a Person, yet it's one whose Vesture was dipt in Blood, which shews him to be a *Man*, a glorious Captain. Let all rational Men judge, Whether it's more reasonable to take a term in such Sense, as it's almost always to be found in in the same Divine Author, than in the Sense of *Philo* a Jew, or *Plato* a Heathen. So that the *Unitarians* have far the most reason to cry out of forc'd Interpretations, whereby to deprive God of an incommunicable Attribute, even his Unity : And they defend these Interpretations with such Distinctions, as are either not intelligible, or which infer absurd Conse-

quences. Such are the Distinctions between the Essence and the Divine Persons ; of the threefold manner of Existence of God ; of Circumcession, or the mutual Penetration or mutual Inexistence of the Divine Persons among themselves ; of God taken personally and essentially in Scripture ; of the Name *Father* sometimes signifying the Father alone, sometimes the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; of the Eternal Generation, or God's Eternal begetting a Son equal to himself, and yet not another God ; of the Divine Operations within and without the Essence, whereto it is that the Internal are attributed to the Persons distinctly, the External to them all Three, though One only be named ; of the Incarnation, or God the Son not being made a Man, but joining himself to a Man in an Hypostatical Union ; hence of two Natures in One Person, of the Communication of Properties, whereby that which is spoken of Christ's Divine Nature, is understood to agree to him according to his Humane Nature, and *vic versa* : and many more confounding Distinctions they use, without which the Holy Scriptures cannot be understood in the Sense of *Trinitarians* : but I am weary with reciting them. Here he broke off, and I rose to take my leave of him. I told him, as the truth is, That I had long taken the Doctrine of the Trinity for granted, and began but now to inquire into it, therefore could not readily reply to those things he had urged, who, I perceived, was well vers'd in the Point ; but I would fur-

ther consider it. He thank'd me much for my Friendly Visit and Patience in hearing him, and hop'd to see me again shortly upon this Occasion.

Now, Sir, give me leave to tell you, that though I was much satisfied with your Letter, taking it for granted you had given a true Representation of the *Socinians*, yet finding by this Discourse, it is far otherwise with them, that they have as high a Veneration for the Holy Scripture as we, that they use their Reason no more than reasonable Men ought to do, viz. for the finding out the true Sense of Scripture ; that they reject the Doctrine of the Trinity, not only because it's contrary to Reason, but more especially because it's contrary to most plain and clear Scriptures, as they conceive ; that they have no need of those nice Distinctions that we are forc'd to make use of ; that the Texts you alledge against them as most clear, are notwithstanding very doubtful and obscure. For these Reasons, and others of this Kind, I am more dissatisfied in this Matter than I was at first, because I perceive by your Letter, that nothing convincing can be urged against them, even by them that are most Learned, such as you are. If you can and will please to take upon you the trouble of another Letter, to answ're these my Scruples and Doubts, you will add thereby much more strength to the many Obligations wherein you have already bound,

*S I R,*

*Your much obliged —*

**Postscript.**

# Postscript.

S I R,

**I**HAD no sooner finish'd my Letter, but you were pleased to send me another, which is an Answer to a Letter you received from an unknown Gentleman, proposing some Objections against your former Letter. My Gentleman hearing of it, came to give me a Visit, and when he had read this your second Letter, he made his Exceptions to two or three Passages in it.

r. You say, *By Personality, I mean that Distinction (whatever it be) whereby the Three are distinguished; but what that is, I do not pretend to determine. And if I should guess, for it will be but guessing, &c.*

Now (saith he) our Saviour in the Holy Scripture tells us plainly, *This is Life Eternal, that they might know thee (Father) the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* John 17. 3. Do not these Names and Characters distinguish the one from the other? Does any thing distinguish Two Persons more fully, than that the one is Father to the other, and the other his Son? The one prayeth, the other is prayed unto. The one is not only God, but the only true God; the other is he whom the Father, the only

true God hath sent: and he that is sent by him is Jesus, the Name of that Man who was the Son of the Virgin Mary; and the Name *Christ* signifies, that he was anointed with the Holy Ghost and Power, for the performance of that Office of saving Men from their Sins, whereunto he was sent by the only true God his Father. I challenge the Learned Doctor, and the Learnedest Doctor at Oxford, (if there be any more Learned than he) to shew me a clearer or plainer Distinction between God and *Mosis*.

So that Dr. Wallis's not pretending to determine the Distinction between God the Sender, and Jesus Christ the Sent, but calling that Determination *Gussing*, is in effect to deny the Authority of Christ's Words, and to call his clear and full determination of that which we are to know for obtaining the Eternal Life, *Gussing*.

In his next Paragraph, speaking of the same Matter, he Complements some Body, craving leave to be ignorant of what the Scripture doth not tell him. Now if I did not consider the vast power Prejudice and long Prepossession have over Mens Minds, I should determine the Doctor to be wilfully blind: But it's plain, he bears false Witness against our Lord, and the Holy Script-

Scripture, whilst he says the Scripture doth not tell him, what it plainly tells him and every Woman that can but read it.

The following Paragraph is Of the damnatory SENTENCE in the Athanasian Creed, which you say, you be annexed only to the Gospels, which the Author thought may, in the Trinity and Incarnation of Christ. To which he excepted thus: This Creed being made (as it seems to the Learned) many hundreds of Years after the Apostles Creed, which contains all General Articles of the Christian Faith and two or three hundred Years after the Nicene Creed, which explain the Doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation more particularly, the Author of it was very impertinent, if he did not design all his Explications to be believed upon pain of Damnation. But if that Argument were wanting, who can read the Athanasian Creed, and find Damnation in the beginning, middle, and conclusion, and can then have the face

to deny, that the not believing of every Clause is damnable? I am sorry to find so much Daubing in Dr. Wallis.

Then we came to your further explaining the parallel of the Cube; where you say, it may be said of it, that, This long Thing is a Cube, and so, This wide is broad, or this which is high is a Cube. But then (saith he) he that says, This long Thing is a Cube, doth in so saying, say, This long Thing is broad and high: consequently in Parallel each Person is Three Persons.

This is all he took notice of at that time, for he was in haste. And I having considered what he had said before, and finding so much Reason and Substance to Scripture in it, could not tell how to defend these Passages, and therefore remit them to you, hoping you will honour with a Return,

SIR,

Yours —

## *Whether Trinity or Unity more dangerous?*

**T**HE Trinitarians and Unitarians agree that there is but one God most High : they both agree that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is that God most High. They differ in this, that Jesus before he was a Man and from Eternity, and also the Holy Ghost, as distinct Persons from God the Father, were and are each of them as perfectly God most High as the Father ; so that each of them is Almighty, Eternal, All-knowing, only Wise, only Good, Infinite, &c. equal to the Father. The Trinitarians assert these things, the Unitarians deny them.

The Question hereupon is, Which of these Parties are in the most dangerous Error, supposing them to be in Error, now the one, now the other ?

If the Trinitarians err, they worship two Persons in God equal to one that is undoubtedly God, that is, they worship three Almighty and only Wise Persons, which are not distinguishable from three most High Gods.

If the Unitarians err, they avoid that Error of worshipping three Persons which they cannot distinguish from three Gods ; but their Error lies in holding so strictly to the Oneness of

God, as well in Person as Essence, that they do not acknowledg, besides that One, two more Persons to be equally God, as well as that One, whom both Parties agree to be so : that is, they err in not acknowledging two unnecessary Persons in God, but holding that the God and Father of Christ is God alone, only necessary and all-sufficient.

If the Trinitarians err, they err against the common Reason of Mankind, and most plain and express Scriptures, which assert that God is One, or that there is but one Supreme God, and always speak of him as one only Person. If the Unitarians err, they err against the doubtful Sense of some obscure Texts, which more fairly admit of another Interpretation consistent with the Unity of the Person of God.

In short, the Question is, Whether the Term *God* includes only one Person, or three Persons ? one Almighty Person, or three distinct Almighty Persons ? And whether the former or the latter is the more dangerous Error, which soever is found an Error ?